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ABSTRACT

How low-income Brazilian students explain their school performance and the predominant achievement causes were studied. The relationship between achievement attribution and school achievement and students' conceptions of choice, career, agency, and relationship with achievement were also studied, using the causal attribution theory of B. Weiner. Subjects were 93 fifth- and sixth-grade students, 45 academically successful and 48 unsuccessful. Most of them attributed their performance to internal causes. Revealing the cultural/ideological value of individual effort the predominant attributions were personal effort, study, and classroom behavior. Success is attributed to internal and controllable factors and failure to internal and uncontrollable factors. The idea of career was associated with an occupation one chooses for a whole life with effort and study. Students believed that each person has freedom to choose a life career. Discourse of these students was consistent with the liberal ideology that transmits the illusion of freedom of choice and the possibility to do whatever one might desire. In more concrete assessments like expectations of schooling and work, the discrepancy between dream and reality appeared. The number of students who dream of college was much larger than the number who believed they would actually go to college. Self-agency and destiny, although opposing ideas, co-existed for many students. This paradox is explained by the obvious contradictions in Brazil where extreme wealth and poverty exist side by side. (Contains nine tables and six references.) (SLD)

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ACHIEVEMENT ATTRIBUTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF AGENCY AND CAREER AMONG LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

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Achievement Attributions and Perceptions of Agency and Career among Low-income Students

Abstract

This investigation had these purposes: (1) to identify how low income Brazilian students explain their school performance and which are the predominant achievement causes; (2) to assess the relationship between achievement attribution and school achievement; and (3) to assess their conceptions of choice, career and agency and the relationship with achievement. Weiner's causal attribution was the theory of choice. The subjects were 93 students, 45 successful and 48 unsuccessful. Most of them attributed their performance to internal causes. Revealing the cultural/ideological value of individual effort the predominant attributions mention personal effort, study and classroom behavior. Success is attributed to internal and controllable factors and failure to internal and uncontrollable factors. Career is associated to an occupation that one chooses for the whole life with effort and study. They believe each person has freedom to choose their life career. Their discourse is consistent with the liberal ideology that transmits the illusion of freedom of choice and the possibility to be whatever one may desire. In more concrete assessments like their expectations of schooling and work, the discrepancy between dream and reality appears. The number of students who dream to go to college is much higher than the number of students who believe they will actually make it to college. Comparing their ideal and real occupational expectations, the discrepancy is smaller, because the initial choice was low. This same discrepancy is seen in their beliefs about the main force in their future: personal decision, work and effort was chosen first, followed by destiny and luck. Though self-agency and destiny are opposing ideas, for many of our students they co-exist. It is a paradox, only explained by the obvious contradictions in Brazil where extreme wealth and poverty live side by side.

ACHIEVEMENT ATTRIBUTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF AGENCY AND CAREER AMONG LOW-INCOME STUDENTS[1]

Elizabeth Maria P. Gama and Denise Meyrelles de Jesus

The high incidence of elementary school failure among low income children, has been a consistent problem in the Brazilian public school system for many years. Even though 95% of the seven to 14 year old children enroll in the first grade no more than 43% conclude the 8th grade (Ribeiro, 1993). Extensive research suggests that teachers believe that the causality of failure is located on the conditions of living of the child that do not provide the adequate cultural and psychological environment for positive growth and learning. Quantitative and qualitative studies have shown that public school teachers consistently attribute the failure of their students to the socioeconomic conditions of the family, their lack of interest in the child's education and socio-psychological characteristics of the child. By perceiving the child as responsible for his/her failure, the causality is displaced to the individual and family level and the student is doomed to fail even before beginning school. Furthermore, teachers' expectations of achievement and years of schooling to be attained by their students are significantly different for those who succeed and those who fail (Gama e Jesus, 1994).

Even though one cannot deny the powerful impact of socioeconomic conditions, it is more likely that school failure in the early grades results from the very precarious physical, material and technical-methodological conditions of the public school system. Within the schools, the teachers'

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causal perceptions and resultant expectations, associated to the student's experience of academic failure at such an early age and in an environment that values and reinforces success and achievement, are rather, the determinants of decreased motivation and the development of attributional patterns that make future failure more probable.

Educational research in the United States has shown the relationship between causal attribution and achievement. However, it has also been criticized because most of the studies with children were experimental. Stipek and Weisz (1981), for instance, recommend that research be conducted in natural settings to assess its trans-contextual validity. In Brazil, the body of literature with children is quite limited and mostly quantitative even though a previous study of Gama & Jesus (1991) was implemented in the school settings.

This research study tries to overcome some of the criticized limitations of the attribution literature. It was designed with the purpose to better understand the causal explanations of success and failure among low-income public school students in Brazil. We were particularly interested in their perception of control --- the perception of having or not having the power to influence events in a certain direction, of contingency between one's behavior and outcome. Given the social class limitations and the precariousness of the school system, what would be the implications of the perception of uncontrollability to one's achievement, career plans and expectations? Does the concept of career have any meaning for those students?

Weiner's theory of causal attribution (1986) was the conceptual model used to understand academic motivation and the processes by which students attribute causality to their achievement. It was our purpose:

1. To identify how Brazilian low income students explain their academic performance and

which are the predominant achievement causes.

2. To assess the relationship between achievement attribution and school achievement.

3. To assess their conceptions of choice, career and agency and the relationship with history of academic achievement or non-achievement.

Methodology

Subjects

The subject pool came from a public elementary school randomly selected among all equal schools in the county. The 93 subjects were 51 fifth graders and 42 sixth graders; 45 (48.4%) of them classified as having a history of success and 48 (51.6%) a history of school failure. Students with a history of failure were those who had been retained in the grade at least once and whose school grades were relatively low. Success students had never been retained in the grade and overall had good school grades. All students who fit these criteria were part of the sample. Forty-two students were male and 51 were female. According to the educational, professional and salary profile of their families they were classified in the low socioeconomic level.

Instruments

Interview guide. Developed for this study, the interview guide was mostly qualitative and contained questions on the following topics:

1). Causal explanations for overall school achievement.

2). Student's definition of career, their ideal and their real expectation of schooling to be completed and occupation to be obtained, their opinion about who or what decides/influences what each person will become, their belief in freedom of choice and their personal assessment regarding their conditions to be what they hoped to be.

Questionnaire. Developed with the purpose to triangulate with the interview data. It was mostly quantitative. Its question content was the same as the interview's. There was an open-ended question about career and one about ideal and real expectation of schooling and work.

Both instruments were developed by the first author, analyzed by the second author and another colleague and pretested with a sample of 12 students (not belonging to the subject pool).

Data Collection

Biographical and educational data were collected in the school files in order to select the students to participate in the sample. All interviews were individual and were conducted by two research assistants previously trained. The questionnaire was administered in small groups.

Analysis of the Data

All the causal attributions assessed in the qualitative interview and in the questionnaire (multiple choice items) about the same issue were submitted to content analysis and classified in the three dimensions suggested by Weiner (1986): locus, stability and controllability. For the interview data, the codification also tried to capture the subjective perception of stability of the respondent in regards to the situation being described.

Weiner's theory considers that external attributions may be uncontrollable or controllable. He understands that even though some of these causes may not be under the control of the student, they may be perceived as being under the volitional control of others. However, he does recognize that "from the perspective of the successful or failing person, external causes seem by definition to be uncontrollable, for they are not willfully changed by the actor" (p. 49). The authors opinion is that in the case of the students' achievement motivation what matters is whether or not they perceive that the causality of their school achievement is under the control of their

own behavior, not the behavior of others. For this reason the controllability dimension was analyzed under two perspectives: (1) according to Weiner's theory and recommendations, for purposes of cross-cultural comparison, and (2) according to a dimension we call "self-controllability" in which all external attributions were considered uncontrollable. Only internal attributions were coded as controllable or uncontrollable.

Achievement evaluation and attribution measured by means of the questionnaire were classified only for purposes of triangulation with qualitative data obtained in the interview.

The questions about real and ideal expectations of schooling were grouped in four educational levels. These were: (1) to complete the grade they were presently enrolled in; (2) to complete the 8th grade; (3) to complete the 3rd year of secondary school or the pre-college course (4) to go to college[2]. Similarly, the ideal and real occupational expectations were classified according to the educational level associated to each choice.

When appropriate statistical tests were performed in the data. If not, just the frequencies of the coded categories were presented.

Triangulation of the Data The results of the correlation between the data obtained in the two instruments are presented in Tables 1 and 2. First all the success and all the failure attributions were correlated separately, regardless of the actual academic achievement of the student. Next, the attributions for overall achievement were correlated, considering only the cases in which the students' causal attributions were consistent with their school achievement. In other words, the authors excluded the cases in which subjects from the success group evaluated

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[2] In the Brazilian school system the 8th grade is the last year of upper elementary school; the 3rd year of secondary school is the last year of high school which can also be completed in the pre-college course.

themselves as not having a good performance and made attributions of failure or the reverse.

In all the cases considered the correlations were positive and significant, establishing the validity of the interview as a method to collect data about the causal explanations of success and failure. Some correlations are higher than others. Actually, the results of the triangulation surprised the investigators. Due to a 100-day strike of the public school teachers, data collection was interrupted for over 100 days. While most of the interviews had been done, none of the questionnaires had been administered. Due to this large time interval we had expected to find some discrepancies between pre and post-strike data.

Results

Most of the students attributed their performance at school to internal causes regardless of their history of success or failure. Revealing the cultural/ideological value of individual effort 34 (52.3%) of the 65 valid internal attributions mentioned reasons of personal effort and studying hard and 18 (27.7%) mentioned their classroom behavior (attention in the class, discipline).

Within the locus dimension the themes that emerged were the ones described in Table 3. Close to 80% of the success students attributed to themselves their achievement and 89.2% of the students with a history of unsatisfactory academic performance blamed themselves for it. There was no difference between those two groups (Table 4).

The stability dimension is related to the perceived possibility of change in the causality of school failure and success[3]. In the analysis of this dimension the authors took into consideration the implied phenomenology of the response. Statements such as "I am studious", "I always

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[3]. In the stability and the controllability dimension the authors were interested in the students' perception of control and stability. Therefore, specific themes were not coded.

study", " I am effortful" (in Portuguese: esforçado)[4], "I am attentious" suggest long term characteristics as opposed to expressions such as "I studied for the test", "I tried to behave in the class" that suggest short term and thus were considered unstable.

All the mentions of intelligence, ability, personal interest in the school or in education (12 cases) were considered stable. On the other hand, only 20 of the effort and studiousness attributions suggested stability. This can be perceived in a statement such as this:

I always study very much after I get back from school.

In opposition to an unstable statement such as this:

In the 3rd grade I didn't pass --- I did not study very much, I used to skip classes. In the other grades I did everything to pass.

Ten of the unstable attributions were related to the emotional state of the students, manifested in a citation such as this:

When they [the teachers] *sent me to the blackboard I became afraid to make a mistake, and of them to be upset with me, but they didn't.*

Close to 60% of the success subjects attributed their good performance to stable causes. They expected continued success. However it is puzzling that about 40% of this same group still saw their success as unstable. Could that be influenced by the fact that they often see so many of their friends being retained in the grade and dropping out of school?

Among the group of unsatisfactory academic performance the sample was divided almost in the middle --- 48.6% of them attributed their failure to stable causes and a little over half of them

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[4] The word used in Portuguese is " aluno esforçado", meaning a student who consistently puts forth effort in studying. In this case "esforçado" is an adjective, suggesting a long term characteristic of the student.

made unstable attributions.

The control dimension has to do with the students' perception of the contingency between their behavior and its consequences. This study suggests a significant relationship between history of academic success and causal attribution, whether we use Weiner's or our coding system.

Based on Weiner's coding system the success students had a significantly higher number of controllable attributions (85.7%). Considering the external attributions as uncontrollable (according to the authors coding rationale) the picture becomes clearer showing a significant relationship between academic performance and causal attribution. While most of the success students again had controllable attributions for their good performance, close to 60% of the failure group had uncontrollable attributions for their poor performance.

In summary, analyzed as a whole, students with a history of success attributed the cause of their good performance to internal and controllable factors while those with a history of failure believed that their poor performance was mostly due to internal and uncontrollable factors.

The students were asked if they could explain what career was. Over half of the students (58%) could not explain the concept in the interview. In the questionnaire 66 (80.5%) of the 82 respondents had some kind of answer. The themes that emerged were very similar (Table 5).

In summary, though not all students could explain what career was, analysis of their discourse shows important components of the concept: what is (work, profession), how and when one constructs a career (something to be achieved with effort, studying and struggling) and with what objective (to be someone in life, to have personal satisfaction).

To better understand the students' concept of career, they were presented in the questionnaire, with a series of statements about the issue and asked if they agreed or not with it.

The differences between success and failure students were small. Their opinion was similar. Their predominant conceptions and percentage of agreement are in Table 5. Most of the students (93.9%) agreed with the item stating that each person has freedom to choose his/her own career.

The issue of choice had previously been brought up in the interview when they were asked if they thought people had any freedom to choose what to do in life and who or what decided what people would be in life. Their answers to those questions are displayed in Table 6. Note that most of the students said they believed in freedom of choice (67.7%) or at least partial freedom (15.1%). However, when we asked them who chose what people would be, only 52% of them mentioned their own person, their education or even themselves along with the parents. The notion of fate/luck or destiny comes up and is mentioned by itself or with other determinants by 36% of the subjects. The presence of this paradoxical belief system is confirmed in the data from the questionnaire. Students were asked to choose, among eight options, the two most important determinants of one's future. The items most often chosen were: (1) personal decision, with hard work and effort (59.7% of choices); (2) everything depends on our destiny; what one will be is written (32.9% of choices) and, (3) the future depends mainly on our luck (21.9% of choices).

When the discussion changed from their abstract concepts and beliefs and focused upon something more concrete like their own expectations of schooling and work, the discrepancy between idealized beliefs regarding choice and career and their own reality becomes clear. For example, as Table 7 shows, there was a wide difference between the number of students who dreamed to go to college, versus the number of students who actually believed they would make it to college. In the failure group the percentage falls from 64% to only 14%. It is also important to point the significant relationship between academic history and the consistency between ideal

and real expectations. Over 80% of the successful students believed they would complete as much schooling that they dreamed to. However, 57.7% of the failure students did not think so. In other words, 57.7% of their ideal educational goals were higher than the level of education they thought they would actually complete.

In the case of their occupational expectations there is less discrepancy between idealized occupation and reality, probably because the initial choice was already low (Table 8). Still, note that 56% of the success students would like to have an occupation of a higher educational level but only 33% of them thought they would. In the failure group only 34% of them dreamed with an occupation classified in the higher educational level, and only 23% thought they would reach that goal. On the other hand, 56% of them saw themselves in occupations that required elementary school or no education at all. These discrepancies are also evident when comparing the real expectation of schooling with educational level of the occupation to be attained (Tables 7 and 8). For example, 60% of the success group believed they would go to college but only 33% of them thought they would have a college level occupation.

Despite their sometimes hopeful expectations, the students ' assessment of their possibility to achieve their goals does seem to be based in the reality of their actual school performance. A significantly higher number of students from the success group (68.4%) believed they would be able to achieve their goals while only 41% of the failure group believed so (Table 9).

The content analysis of their responses presented interesting results. Again, the most common explanation for future success was lots of studying and personal effort. Using Weiner's attributional dimensions, the large majority (76%) of the responses of the 42 students who expected to achieve their goals were categorized as internal and controllable. These were: lots of

studying and personal effort and personal will. On the other hand, the majority (66%) of the responses of the students who expected not to achieve their goals were internal and uncontrollable. These were: anticipation of failure or obstacles to success, lack of ability or other personal condition and lack of financial/economic conditions.

Conclusions

In synthesis, this investigation leads to the following conclusions:

1. Regardless of their overall history of success or failure in elementary school, most of the students assume responsibility for their performance and attribute it to causes that are predominantly internal.

2. Revealing the cultural-ideological value of individual effort, the predominant internal attributions mention reasons of personal effort, hard studying and classroom behavior. This trend is also evident in their explanations for expecting to achieve what they wish for their lives --- most of their reasons for expected success have to do with lots of effort and studying hard.

3. There is no significant difference between the two groups in terms of the stability of their causal attribution. Overall, a little over half of the students have stable attributions.

4. There is a significant relationship between school performance and perceived control of the causal attributions. Students with a history of success, more often than those with a history of failure, see themselves as having personal control over their school achievement. This is present in both coding systems.

5. Taking into consideration only the self-controllability dimension the relationship is clearer. Academic success is associated with controllable causal attributions and academic failure is more frequently related to uncontrollability.

6. Considering the students' age group, they seem to have a fair idea of the concept of career as: a profession one chooses and follows with lots of effort after finishing school and in order to be somebody in life.

7. Most of the students believe in freedom or partial freedom to choose one's career and work according to their vocation. However, at the same time, the ideas of destiny, fate or luck are also mentioned by many students as an important factor in their career and life. This same trend is revealed in the questionnaire data: personal choice followed by destiny and luck are considered, by both groups, the main determinants of their future.

8. Consistency between real and ideal choices is significantly related to academic history. Success students have ideal expectations consistent with their real ones. On the other hand, close to 60% of the failure group have real expectations lower than their ideal ones. It seems that, in both cases, they know what they will be capable of achieving.

9. There is no difference between the two groups in terms of ideal and real occupational level, probably because their initial ideal choices are low. In this case, it is likely that the students' choices were reduced by perceptions of social class limitations.

10. Academic history seems to be significantly related to the students' assessment of their possibility to achieve that which they expect to. A higher number of success students believe they can achieve what they expect to, while the failure students believe they cannot. Here too, perception of control over their lives shows up as an explanation of their expectations. Those who believe they can achieve their goals mention mostly reasons that are internal and controllable-- this despite their history of performance. On the other hand, 66% of those who believe they will not be able to achieve their goals mention internal and uncontrollable reasons.

Discussion

The results of this investigation are consistent with a previous study conducted by the authors in Brazil (Gama & Jesus, 1991) and, in terms of the achievement attribution results, provide cross-cultural support to Weiner's theory of achievement motivation.

As expected, history of academic success and failure is significant related to the controllability dimension of the causal attributions. Success students more frequently than failure students explain their achievement with controllable attributions. Those with a history of poor academic performance, on the other hand, believe that their failure is due to causes that are uncontrollable by them.

The predominance of internal attributions, mostly with an effort/hard studying/having discipline and attention content, reflects the dominant liberal ideology of the Brazilian society. This ideology inculcates through the liberal education ideals, the illusion of equality of opportunity, freedom of choice and the possibility to be what one wishes to be provided that one works hard. Therefore, their expressed belief in freedom of choice and personal agency, observed in this research, were not surprising to the authors.

How can counselors deal with the dissonance between idealized concepts of career and choice that students have internalized, their beliefs in personal responsibility versus the contingencies and limitations of the social class they belong to, the limitations of the public schools and their own achievement? In the case of our research we are faced with a paradox: the notion of destiny which, after the value of personal effort, is considered by the subjects the main force to one's future. Although self-agency and destiny/luck are opposing notions, for many of our students they coexist. In a mystical and contradictory society such as Brazil, this is not hard

to understand. It may be the manner they deal with the obvious discrepancy between their ideal expectations of schooling and their evaluation of how much schooling they will be able to complete. This cruel passage from dream to reality is also evident when one analyzes their very modest occupational expectations already at such an early age.

Arnkoff and Mahoney (1979) explain that the western culture has developed an ideology regarding the perception of control over much of our lives, mainly in terms of achievement and our relationship with other people. Control, the combination of skill plus power, is part of our shared theory of social structure. They explain that our control is large, but not infinite. They also report a consistent relationship between belief in personal control and socioeconomic status and conclude:

> Those who are unsuccessful often have little faith in their control over events. These individuals may still subscribe to the belief that control is possible for some people --- but not for them (p. 160).

This belief that control is possible for others but not for themselves probably explains the discrepancy between the students' more abstract beliefs about choice and agency and their ideal and real educational and occupational expectations as well as their individual evaluation about what it would be possible for them to achieve in their lives. Their beliefs would be part of our shared theory of social structure, even though, for themselves these ideals may not be possible.

The point to be discussed here is that the career development/counseling literature in Brazil and elsewhere does not seem to be dealing effectively with problems of children from the low income strata. By perpetuating values and expectations of a liberal-individualist society and not giving the students the adequate cognitive-emotional and economic opportunities to overcome

their class limitations and achieve their goals we increase their probability of failure and their sense of lack of control over their future.

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Table 1. Triangulation between the Various Attribution Measures

Variables	Correlation	Signif.	N
• **Causal attribution of success** (all success attributions)			
.Locus/stab./control	0.624[a]	0.04	50
• **Causal attribution of failure** (all failure attributions)			
.Locus/stab./control	0.845[a]	0.00004	22
• **Causal attribution according to academic performance** [c]			
.Locus/stab./control	0.758[a]	0.00001	61
• **Causal attribution by dimension. according to academic performance** [c]			
. Locus	0.296[b]	0.02	61
. Stability	0.709[b]	0.0001	61
. Controllability	0.322[b]	0.011	61

a. Contingency coefficient; b. Phi coefficient

c. Only the cases in which the student's attribution was consistent with school performance.

Table 2. Triangulation between Qualitative and Quantitative Variables

Variables	Correlation	Signif.	N
• **Desired occupational level**	0.491[a]	0.001	74
• **Ideal expectation of schooling**	0.538[a]	0.001	75
• **Real expectation of schooling**	0.303[a]	0.010	70
• **Occupational level to be attained**	0.376[a]	0.004	55
• **Desired X achieved schooling**	0.602[b]	0.001	64
• **Desired X achieved occupation**	0.385[b]	0.039	37
• **Opinion about freedom of choice**	0.241[c]	0.056	62
• **Possibility to fulfill one's dream**	0.181[c]	0.129	70

a. Spearman Corr.; b. Contingency coefficient ; c. Phi. coefficient

Table 3. Most Common Causal Attributions of Success and Failure at School, by Locus

Causal explanation	Frequency	
Internal attributions		
Personal effort / to study hard	34	(52.3%)
Attention/discipline in the classes	18	(27.7%)
Ability or personal interest in school/education	12	(18.5%)
To be a lucky person	01	(01.5%)
Total	65	
External attributions		
Qualities or behaviors of the teacher	10	(71.4%)
Help from others	02	(14.3%)
Qualities/characteristics of the school	02	(14.3%)
Total	14	

Table 4. Causal Attributions of Success or Failure according to Academic History

Causal attribution	Academic History: Satisfactory n (%)	Academic History: Unsatisfactory n (%)	Total n (%)
• Locus			
Internal	32 (76.2)	33 (89.2)	65 (82.3)
External	10 (23.8)	04 (10.8)	14 (17.7)
Total	42	37	79
• Stability			
Stable	25 (59.5)	18 (48.6)	43 (54.4)
Unstable	17 (40.5)	19 (51.4)	36 (45.6)
Total	42	37	79
• Controllability *(1)			
Controllable	36 (85.7)	19 (51.4)	55 (69.6)
Uncontrollable	06 (14.3)	18 (48.6)	24 (30.4)
Total	42	37	79
• Self-controllability * (2)			
Controllable	28 (66.7)	15 (40.5)	43 (54.4)
Uncontrollable	14 (33.3)	22 (59.5)	36 (45.6)
Total	42	37	79

(1): $*\chi^2 (1) = 10.98208$ $p<.0009$ (2): $*\chi^2 (1) = 5.41324$ $p< .01$.

Table 5. Concept of Career

Themes	Frequency	
	Interview	Questionnaire
• It is a job, a profession	15 (39.5%)	29 (43.9%)
• Profession that one follows with effort and struggle	11 (28.9%)	11 (16.7%)
• Something one does after growing up or finishing studies	06 (15.8%)	02 (03.0%)
• It means to be somebody in life	06 (15.8%)	12 (18.2%)
• Something one does because one likes to do it	00 (00.0%)	09 (13.6%)
• Something very important for the person	00 (00.0%)	03 (04.5%)
TOTAL	38	66

• Each person has freedom to choose his/her career according to one's vocation	(93.9%)
• Career is related to a occupation, the work one chooses for their lives	(93.9%).
• Career is something for rich and poor people	(91%).
• Both men and women need to have a career	(75%).
• Career is life choice. Career only refers to the work we choose to do during our professional life	(74.1%).
• Career includes only the paid work of our profession	(71.6%).
• Aptitude and interest are important dimensions of career. People cannot follow a career for a whole life if they dislike it or are not good at it	(69.5%).

Table 6. Students' Beliefs about Choice in Life

Issue considered	Academic History					
	Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		Total	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
• Freedom to choose what to do in life						
. There is freedom of choice	29	(64.4)	34	(70.8)	63	(67.7)
. There is no freedom of choice	10	(22.2)	06	(12.5)	16	(17.2)
. There is only partial freedom	06	(13.3)	08	(16.7)	14	(15.1)
• Who/what chooses what people will be in life?						
. The own person	14	(32.6)	23	(48.9)	37	(41.1)
. Fate or destiny	12	(27.9)	11	(23.4)	23	(25.6)
. The family	04	(09.3)	03	(06.4)	07	(07.8)
. How much education one has	04	(09.3)	02	(04.3)	06	(06.7)
. Luck	01	(02.3)	03	(06.4)	04	(04.4)
. The person and the parents	02	(04.7)	02	(04.3)	04	(04.4)
. Fate and the person together	02	(04.7)	02	(04.3)	04	(04.4)
. Fate and the family	01	(02.3)	01	(02.1)	02	(02.2)
. Parents and teachers	01	(02.3)	00	(00.0)	01	(01.1)
. Social conditions	01	(02.3)	00	(00.0)	01	(01.1)
. The politicians/family/education	01	(02.3)	00	(00.0)	01	(01.1)

Table 7 . Expectations of Schooling by Academic History

Variable	Academic History: Satisfactory n (%)	Academic History: Unsatisfactory n (%)	Total n (%)
• Ideal expectation of schooling *(1)			
. To complete present grade	00 (00.0)	00 (00.0)	00 (00.0)
. To complete 8th. grade	00 (00.0)	04 (09.1)	04 (04.6)
. To complete high-school	06 (14.0)	12 (27.3)	18 (20.7)
. To go to college	37 (86.0)	28 (63.6)	65 (74.7)
. Do not know	01	02	03
• Real expectation of schooling * (2)			
. To complete present grade	00 (00.0)	00 (00.0)	00 (00.0)
. To complete 8th. grade	04 (10.5)	23 (53.5)	27 (33.3)
. To complete high school	11 (28.9)	14 (32.6)	25 (30.9)
. To go to college	23 (60.5)	06 (14.0)	29 (35.8)
. Do not know	07	05	12
• Relationship between real and ideal expectation* (3)			
. Dream and reality are the same	23 (82.1)	10 (38.5)	33 (61.1)
. Reality lower than dream	05 (17.9)	15 (57.7)	20 (37.0)
. Reality superior to dream	00 (00.0)	01 (03.8)	01 (01.9)

Note: Percentages do not include the category "do not know".

(1) * χ^2 (2) = 07.23561; p <0.02

(2) * χ^2 (2) = 23.47670; p <0.00001

(3) * χ^2 (2) = 11.06231; p < 0.003

Table 8. Educational Level of the Occupational Expectations

Variable considered	Academic History		Total
	Satisfactory n (%)	Unsatisfactory n (%)	n (%)
• Educational level of the ideal occupation			
. Higher education	23 (56.1)	15 (34.9)	38 (45.2)
. Secondary school	15 (36.6)	19 (44.2)	34 (40.5)
. Elementary school	02 (04.9)	08 (18.6)	10 (11.9)
. No education needed	01 (02.4)	01 (02.3)	02 (02.4)
. Do not know	04	05	09
• Educational level of the occupation to be attained			
. Higher education	11 (33.3)	07 (23.3)	18 (28.6)
. Secondary school	14 (42.4)	06 (20.0)	20 (31.7)
. Elementary school	04 (12.1)	09 (30.0)	13 (20.6)
. No education needed	04 (12.1)	08 (26.7)	12 (19.0)
. Do not know	12	18	30
• Relationship between real and ideal occupation			
. Dream and reality of the same level	22 (71.0)	20 (74.1)	42 (72.4)
. Reality inferior to dream	08 (25.8)	07 (25.9)	15 (25.9)
. Reality superior to dream	01 (03.2)	00 (00.0)	01 (01.7)

Note The percentages do not include the category "do not know".

Table 9. Students' Personal Assessment about their Conditions to Achieve their Goals

	Academic History		
	Satisfactory n (%)	Unsatisfactory n (%)	n (%)
• Possibility to achieve what they would like to be *(1)			
It is possible	26 (68.4)	16 (41.0)	42 (54.5)
It is not possible	12 (31.6)	23 (59.0)	35 (45.5)
• Reasons to achieve what they want to be in life			
Lots of studying and effort	19 (73.1)	10 (62.5)	29
Personal ability or interest	02 (07.7)	02 (12.5)	04
Personal will	02 (07.7)	01 (06.3)	03
Help from the parents	02 (07.7)	00 (00.0)	02
Faith in God	00 (00.0)	02 (12.5)	02
Easiness of task	01 (03.8)	00 (00.0)	01
Cannot explain	00 (00.0)	01 (06.3)	01
TOTAL	26	16	42
• Reasons NOT to achieve what they want to be in life			
Anticipation of failure/obstacles to succeed	04 (25.0)	06 (31.6)	10
Lack of ability or other personal conditions	05 (31.2)	02 (10.5)	07
Lack of financial conditions	04 (25.0)	02 (10.5)	06
Not willing to study and put forth effort	00 (00.0)	04 (21.0)	04
Social/economic conditions of country	02 (12.5)	02 (10.5)	04
Difficulty of the area	00 (00.0)	01 (05.3)	01
Cannot explain	01 (06.2)	02 (10.5)	03
TOTAL	16	19	35

(1) * χ^2 (1) = 5,82609; $p < 0,01$